

Considerations to Think about When you Evaluate Your Community Based Awareness Campaign

What is Evaluation?

Monitoring means regularly collecting information on your project and analysing it to see how things are going. To do this, you can look at quantitative information, hard facts such as how much money and time you've spent on the project and how many homes you've reached, for example. You can also consider qualitative information, the less measurable things, like whether the project is running smoothly and if people involved are satisfied. Proper monitoring will make it easy to evaluate your project when it ends. It will also give you a basis to make decisions on how the project should go forward and to make changes along the way if you find something isn't going well.

Evaluation is a review of the whole project, looking at its overall value and effect. It usually takes place when the project is complete. You can use the information you've collected during monitoring. Doing an evaluation will help you see how and where your project has been successful. It will let you see how well funds have been used, and what the benefits of your project have been to those involved. You can use this information to improve future projects.

There are several reasons why monitoring and evaluating your project is particularly important for community based projects:

Accountability. When you get funding from an organization, they will usually make you report back on what you're doing and what you're spending their money on or specific targeted numbers to reach within a given time frame. You need to monitor your project regularly to collect this information.

Secure future funding. Usually funding organizations will want to see evidence of the effect you had to help them decide whether to give you money. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of your projects will provide this. It provides evidence of what a project has achieved and what might be achieved as this project continues in the future.

Check the project's progress. It can be easy to lose sight of the original aims you had for your project. Monitoring on a regular basis and checking whether you're still on course to achieve your goals will prevent this. It will also help you keep an eye on timelines and budget.

To learn from your experience. Proper monitoring and evaluation of your project means you can see what has worked well and what hasn't. You can then use this information to improve future projects.

To contribute to the scientific base for community public health interventions: the results of program evaluation can provide new theories about human behaviour and community changes, which help implementing better programs.

How can you monitor your project's progress?

Before you begin monitoring, it's important to think about exactly what you want your project to achieve. Then you can look at how you're going to monitor each of those areas. Doing this thinking upfront should mean that you won't miss opportunities to gather information along the way, and you'll be able to do a complete evaluation at the end. A lot of your monitoring will focus on the hard facts: how much is being spent, and how many people your project is reaching. However, the qualitative side is important too. Are the expectations of the people involved in your project being met? What would they like to see done better?

There are many ways you can gather qualitative information:

Questionnaire or survey. These are simple to put together and distribute. You can reach a lot of people quickly and easily. You can have questionnaires with multiple choice boxes people can tick, and you can ask them to give you more detailed replies. The questionnaire can be anonymous if you think you'll get better

responses. However, you need to make the questions as clear as possible so that you get exactly the information you want. You'll need to analyse the information once you've collected all the questionnaires to get an overall picture of what people think. Questionnaires can be especially useful for monitoring attitudes or behaviours change.

Feedback forms. If you're holding an event, why not ask people to fill in a feedback form at the end? The event will be fresh in their mind, so you should get accurate responses. However, some people might rush the form if they're in a hurry to leave, so do offer them the option of emailing it back to you. You can use their feedback to improve your future events.

Interviews. Although they can be time consuming, interviews carried out face-to-face or on the phone are a great way to get detailed information on what people think of your project about individuals' attitudes, values, and opinions to evaluators.

Focus groups. Getting a group of people who are representative of the priority population together to discuss about the opinions, values, insights, perceptions, and misconceptions your project is an easy way to gather information. Bringing a group together means people can spark new ideas in each other, and you often get better responses. However, you need to think carefully about the information you want to collect from your focus group, and continually steer the conversation in that direction. It's easy to let the discussion drift off track.

How can you evaluate your project?

Asking yourself the following questions before beginning your evaluation will help you do it well:

1. What is the purpose of your evaluation? What do you want your evaluation to demonstrate?
2. Who are you evaluating for? Is it for your funders, the community, or your organization?
3. What are you going to evaluate? Which elements of the project do you intend to look at?
4. How are you going to evaluate? What methods are you going to use to carry out your evaluation? You should use a range, and collect both quantitative and qualitative data.
5. How will you collect the data you need? Is the data available? Do you have data analysis skills? Do you have access to statistical consultants?
6. What will you do with the data you collect? Data by itself is just data; you'll need to analyze it to come to a conclusion about what it shows. You'll also need to consider how you're going to present the analysis and your conclusions.
7. How will you act on your analysis? All too often the findings of monitoring and evaluation end up gathering dust on a shelf. Use them to plan for the future.

Important points to remember:

Before starting your project, consider what you'll want to evaluate at the end and what you'll need to monitor to do this.

1. Don't just focus on statistics in your monitoring and analysis. It's just as important to get qualitative information.
2. Be realistic about how long it's going to take to see effects from your project. Don't expect instant results.
3. Monitoring and evaluation should be seen as something positive by everyone involved in the project, not something to worry about.

Potential Evaluation Considerations:

1. What is the overall goal for your project?
2. What is the purpose of the project?
3. Who is your target audience? What do you know about the target audience?
4. Why do you feel that this is the best way to promote your campaign? What evidence do you have to back that up?
5. How do you know in the end once the project ends that it was successful? How do you show that it was successful?
6. How many flyers / enrollments / postcards did you distribute? How many were returned?
7. How many organizations did you talk to about displaying your materials and how many approved of displaying materials?
8. How many phone calls did you receive if you localized your messages?
9. How many local media vendors ran your television/radio/newspapers ads?
10. Of the local media vendors, what is their normal circulation or reach/listenership?
11. How many impressions did your ad make to the general public?
12. How many local media vendors donated time on their stations to play your ads?
13. What dollar amount did you receive of donated time for advertising?
14. Did you receive any testimonials or human interest stories? If so, how many, what about, etc.?
15. How many organizations took your ideas and did above and beyond for your campaign?
16. If you handed out FOBT kits, how many did you distribute?
17. What types of questions did you receive from the general public?
18. How consistent were the messages broadcasted or given to the public?
19. What questions will your evaluation answer in the end about how to make your project better next time?

Capturing Your Evaluation

There are several different models that you can utilize to capture your evaluation. Each organization certainly chooses to use whichever model best suits their needs.

There are example forms on the next few pages of models available to help you capture your evaluation for your plans.

